

Message Text

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FM AMEMBASSY PARAMARIBO
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C O N F I D E N T I A L PARAMARIBO 121

BRUSSELS FOR USEEC

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EFIS PLOS NS US
SUBJ: SURINAM-US SHRIMP FISHING RELATIONS

REF: PARAMARIBO 120

1. TALKS BETWEEN US FISHING INDUSTRY REPRESENTATIVES AND
GOVERNMENT OF SURINAM (GOS) REPRESENTATIVES, IN WHICH EMBASSY
PARTICIPATED, AND OUR OWN ANALYSIS OF THE SITUATION
INDICATE THE FOLLOWING OUGHT TO BE TAKEN INTO CONSIDERATION:

A. SURINAM WILL PROMULGATE ITS 200-MILE ECONOMIC ZONE
SOMETIME WITHIN THE NEXT FEW WEEKS.

B. IN IMPLEMENTING THE ZONE FOR FISHERIES PURPOSES,
GOS WILL NEED TO DRAW UP REGULATIONS FOR LICENSING, CATCH,
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ETC. KEY MAN IN MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE SAYS THESE WILL BE
READY SIMULTANEOUSLY WITH PROMULGATION OF 200-MILE ZONE;
PAST EXPERIENCE WITH GOS SUGGESTS, HOWEVER, THAT REGULA-
TIONS MAY TAKE MORE TIME AND THAT THERE MAY BE AN INTERVAL,
EVEN OF SOME LENGTH, BETWEEN COMING INTO FORCE OF ZONE
AND ANNOUNCEMENT OF THE REGULATIONS.

C. AGRICULTURE MINISTRY WANTS AND INTENDS TO PUT REGULATIONS ON A UNILATERAL BASIS, WITH CATCHES, LICENSE FEES, ETC. SIMPLY ANNOUNCED BY GOS, AND WITH PREFERENCE GIVEN TO SHIPS BASED IN SURINAM, WITH "SURPLUS" THEN TO BE LICENSED TO OUTSIDE SHIPS. MINISTRY OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS, HOWEVER, AT LEAST WANTS TO CONSIDER GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT FISHERIES AGREEMENTS RATHER THAN UNILATERAL GOS LICENSING.

D. GOS EXPECTS TO NEGOTIATE SOME KIND OF AN ARRANGEMENT WITH GUYANA AND PERHAPS WITH FRENCH GUIANA FOR RECIPROCAL TREATMENT OF SHIPS BASED IN RESPECTIVE COUNTRIES. TO PUT ITSELF IN POSITION OF STRENGTH FOR SUCH NEGOTIATIONS, GOS IS LIKELY ESTABLISH INITIAL REGULATIONS SIMILAR TO THOSE IN EFFECT IN GUYANA AND POSSIBLE FRENCH GUIANA. WHILE THE MOTIVE OF THE GOS WILL BE TO STRENGTHEN ITS NEGOTIATING POSITION (NOT ONLY REGARDING SHRIMP FISHERIES BUT OVERALL RELATIONS WITH NEIGHBORING COUNTRIES) IT WILL BE AMERICAN BUSINESSES THAT WILL LIKELY SUFFER, AT LEAST IN THE SHORT RUN, FROM THE CONTROVERSIES INVOLVED.

E. IF GOS USES UNILATERAL REGULATIONS GIVING STRONG PREFERENCE TO SURINAM-BASED SHIPS (AS WAS DONE BY GUYANA) THEN THIS WILL BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF CASTLE AND COOKE, AN AMERICAN FIRM, WHICH OPERATES TH MAJOR SHRIMP PROCESSING FACILITY IN PARAMARIBO AND GETS ITS SHRIMP MAINLY FROM SOUTH KOREAN SHIPS, WITH VERY FEW US OR CONFIDENTIAL

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SURINAM FLAG BOATS, AND TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF AMERICAN SHIP OPERATORS BASED IN GEORGETOWN AND CAYENNE.

F. IF GOS GOES FOR GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT AGREEMENTS ALONG THE LINES OF THE SITUATION IN FRENCH GUIANA, THEN THIS WILL BE TO THE ADVANTAGE OF THE AMERICAN SHIP OPERATORS IN GEORGETOWN AND CAYENNE, WHO USE AMERICAN-FLAG SHIPS WHICH WOULD PRESUMABLY BE COVERED BY THE AGREEMENT, AND TO THE DISADVANTAGE OF CASTLE AND COOKE, FOR WHOSE KOREAN SHIPS THE ROK GOVERNMENT WOULD HAVE TO NEGOTIATE.

G. BOTH GOERGETOWN AND PARAMARIBO-BASED REPRESENTATIVES AGREED THAT NONE OF THEM WOULD BE ABLE TO CONTINUE THEIR BUSINESSES IN THIS AREA IF SURINAM ENFORCES THE SAME LEVEL OF FEES CHARGED BY GUYANA. SHIPS CANNOT OPERATE IN ONLY ONE ZONE, BUT MUST FOLLOW THE SHRIMP AS THEY MIGRATE. A COMPANY COULD AFN TOHPAY A MODEST FEE TO THE COUNTRY IN WHICH IT BASED (SUCH AS THE PRESENT GUYANA FEE FOR GEORGETOWN-BASED SHIPS) PROVIDED IT IS ALSO FREE TO FISH IN THE OTHER ZONES; IF ANY SHIP HAS TO PAY AN "OUTSIDER" FEE OF THE MAGNITUDE CHARGED BY GUYANA TO OPERATE OUTSIDE

ITS BASE ZONE, THEN THAT SHIP WILL HAVE TO QUIT ENTIRELY.

H. THE DISTCNCTION BETWEEN AMERICAN-FLAG AND NON-AMERICAN FLAG SHIPS IS MORE OF A TECHNICALITY THAN A MATTER OF US INTEREST, SINCE THESE AMERICAN-FLAG SHIPS DO NOT CARRY AMERICAN CREWS OR, IN MOST CASES, AMERICAN MASTERS, BUT CARRY ALIEM CREWS WHOSE COMPENSATION IS IN ACCORDANCE WITH LOCAL CUSTOM AND NOT AMERICAN WAGES.

I. UP UNTIL NOW, THE OBVIOUS CONFLICT OF INTEREST, INSOFAR AS THE SURINAM SHRIMP FISHERY IS CONCERNED, BETWEEN THE GEORGETOWN AND CAYENNE-BASED COMPANIES AND CASTLE AND COOKE HAS PREVENTED MUCH COOPERATION AND PERHAPS EVEN COMMUNICATIONS BETWEEN THEM. THE MEETING THIS
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WEEK MAY HAVE GONE SOME WAY TOWARDS MELTING THE ICE AND PROMOTING A LONGER-RANGE VIEW OF THEIR COMMON INTEREST.

2. DURING THE TALKS THIS WEEK, THE AMBASSADOR MADE A POINT, IN DISCUSSION WITH THE MINISTER OF ECONOMIC AFFAIRS AND ACTING DIRECTOR OF THE MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE, OF URGING THE GOS NOT TO TAKE ITS DECISION REGARDING THE SHRIMP FISHERY IN A NARROW FRAMEWORK BUT TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ITS OVERALL TRADE AND INVESTMENT RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES; NOT TO TAKE ANY SUDDEN OR ILL-THOUGHT-OUT ACTION, BUT RATHER TO TAKE TIME AND LOOK OVER THE WHOLE RANGE OF SURINAM-AMERICAN RELATIONS THAT MIGHT BE AFFECTED BY WHAT-EVER SHRIMP FISHERY DECISIONS ARE TAKEN. AMBASSADOR THOUGHT THAT THIS WAS AS FAR AS HE COULD GO IN EXPRESSING A USG VIEW WITHOUT FURTHER CONSIDERATION BY WASHINGTON AND INSTRUCTION.

3. THE US CAN HAVE SOME INFLUENCE ON THE WAY THAT GOS DECIDES IN THIS MATTER, EVEN THOUGH OUR VIEWS MAY NOT BE DECISIVE. IF WE DO OR SAY NOTHING, THEN OUR STANDING FOR PROTESTING IF OUR INTERESTS ARE ADVERSELY AFFECTED WILL BE WEAKENED. IF WE WANT TO INFLUENCE THE GOS, THEN, OR AT THE VERY LEAST BUILD A BASIS FOR PROTECTING OUR INTERESTS ONCE THE GOS REGULATIONS HAVE COME INTO EFFECT, WE SHOULD MAKE A DEMARCHE TO THE GOS AT THE VERY TOP SOON.

4. AMBASSADOR EXPECTS TO SEE THE PRIME MINISTER IN THE NEXT TWO WEEKS PRIOR TO DEPARTING FOR WASHINGTON FOR THE ARA CHIEFS OF MISSION CONFERENCE (PM WOULD NOT HAVE TIME THEREAFTER BECAUSE OF STATE VISIT OF THE QUEEN OF THE NETHERLANDS). IF INSTRUCTIONS ARE TO BE OF TIMELY USE, THEY SHOULD BE SENT AS RAPIDLY AS POSSIBLE.
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